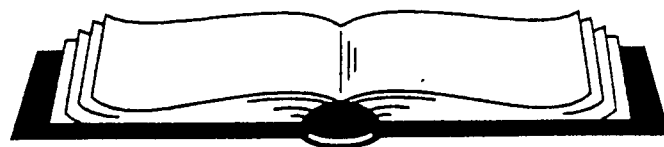


## NEW JERSEY

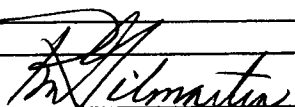
1999-2000  
Guidelines and  
Application**BEST  
PRACTICES**

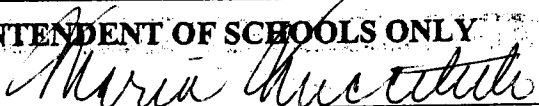
ORIGINAL

**Deadline for Application to County Office:  
NOVEMBER 22, 1999**

Category	<u>Educational Technology</u>	(Application is limited to one category. See page 3 for details.)
Practice Name	<u>Over The River and Through The Woods</u>	
Number of Schools with Practice	<u>1</u>	(If more than one school or district, read and complete information on page 2.)

County	<u>Passaic County</u>		
District (Proper Name)	<u>West Milford Township</u>	School District	
District Address	street/p. o. box <u>46 Highlander Drive</u>		
	city <u>West Milford, NJ</u>	<u>07480</u>	zip code
District Telephone	<u>973-697-1700</u>	Fax <u>973-697-8351</u>	Email
Chief School Administrator	<u>Robert Gilmartin</u>	<u>Superintendent</u>	
Nominated School #1 (Proper Name)	<u>Maple Road School</u>		
School Address	<u>36 Maple Road</u> <u>West Milford, NJ 07480</u>		

	street/p. o. box <u>36 Maple Road</u>		
	city <u>West Milford, NJ</u>	<u>07480</u>	zip code
School Telephone	<u>973-697-3606</u>	Fax <u>973-208-0257</u>	Email <u>faith.delaney@wmtps.org</u>
School Principal	<u>Faith N. Delaney</u>		
Program Developer(s)	<u>Margaret B. Mack</u>		
Chief School Administrator's or Charter School Lead Person's Signature			

<b>FOR USE BY COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS ONLY</b>	
Approved: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	County Superintendent's Signature <u></u>

**NEW JERSEY  
BEST PRACTICES  
1999-2000 APPLICATION**

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**Application Requirements:**

- ◆ **RESPONSES** to the information and the statements below must be **ANONYMOUS**. No reference should be made to the names of the district or the school(s). Use the words "the school" or "the schools" in referring to the applicant in responding to the statements.
- ◆ **USE ONLY THE SPACE PROVIDED ON THE APPLICATION FORM** on pages 1, 2 (if applicable) and 4 and **THE NUMBER OF LINES SPECIFIED FOR RESPONSES** to the statements. Do not include any additional materials, as they will not be reviewed in the selection process.
- ◆ Application must be **keyboarded on 8 1/2" x 11" white paper, portrait format**. **Ten-point or larger computer font or twelve-pitch or larger typewriter font** must be used. (This sentence is in ten-point.)
- ◆ **KEYBOARDED RESPONSES** to the statements below must be **no more than a total of three pages**. Keyboard the statement followed by the response. Format your response to the number of lines specified.
- ◆ The information on page 4 and the keyboarded responses to statements must be printed or copied on **one side of the page**. The information on pages 1 and 2 (if applicable) must be printed or copied on **one side of the page**. Staple pages 1 and 2 (if applicable) and 4 and the keyboarded responses together.
- ◆ The original application must be signed by the district chief school administrator or charter school lead person, indicating his/her approval.
- ◆ The original and seven copies of the application must be submitted to the county superintendent of schools by November 22, 1999, with the Itemized List of District Applications form. Keep the seven copies of each application together with the original containing the signature of the district chief school administrator or charter school lead person on the top of each set.
- ◆ **FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE PROCEDURES FOR SUBMISSION OF THE APPLICATION MAY RESULT IN THE ELIMINATION OF THE APPLICATION.**

The following data is required to assist the panelists in the evaluation of the application:		
<b>Type of School</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Elementary School <input type="checkbox"/> Middle School <input type="checkbox"/> Junior High School <input type="checkbox"/> High School <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<b>Grade Levels</b> <div style="text-align: center; border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 50px; margin: 0 auto;">4</div>	<b>Practice Name</b> <u>Over the River and Through the Woods</u> <hr/> <b>Number of Schools with Practice</b> <u>1</u> <b>Number of Districts with Practice</b> <u>1</u>

Check the ONE CATEGORY into which the practice best fits.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Arts (Visual and Performing Arts) <input type="checkbox"/> Assessment/Evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> Bilingual Education and Diversity <input type="checkbox"/> Citizenship/Character Education <input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Education Programs <input type="checkbox"/> Educational Support/Guidance and Counseling Programs (services contributing to high student achievement)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational Technology <input type="checkbox"/> Health and Physical Education <input type="checkbox"/> Language Arts Literacy <input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Development <input type="checkbox"/> Public Engagement (family involvement and partnerships with business, community and/or higher education)	<input type="checkbox"/> Safe Learning Environment <input type="checkbox"/> School-to-Careers/Workplace Readiness <input type="checkbox"/> Science <input type="checkbox"/> Social Studies <input type="checkbox"/> Special Education <input type="checkbox"/> World Languages

1. Describe the practice proposed for recognition, and list its objectives. Detail how the practice is innovative, how it promotes high student achievement and how it can be replicated. **(Maximum of 50 lines for response)**
2. Describe the educational needs of students that the practice addresses and how they were identified. List the *Core Curriculum including the Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards\** addressed by the practice and describe how the practice addresses the standard(s). **(Maximum of 50 lines for response)**
3. Document the assessment measures used to determine the extent to which the objectives of the practice have been met. **(Maximum of 60 lines for response)**

\*The 1996 edition of the *Core Curriculum Content Standards* published by the New Jersey State Department of Education was disseminated to all districts and charter schools and is available on line through the department's website at <http://www.state.nj.us/education>.  
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**1. Describe the practice proposed for recognition, and list its objectives. Detail how the practice is innovative, how it promotes high student achievement and how it can be replicated.**

Over the River and Through the Woods is an interactive, interdisciplinary and intergenerational approach to the study of New Jersey's regions. Throughout the school year, children observe and record changes in the natural environment at home and at school. Students become active participants in learning activities as they explore and record the seasonal changes in the varied landscapes of their home/school community. This project enables students to construct their own learning, to gain new information and develop an understanding of the fragile environment in which they live, work and play. Participants learn to identify and recognize plants, animals and geographical features in the natural environment of their school, community and region.

Biography projects are launched as students interview local historians and older members of the community. Oral history is shared and compared to written records, reference materials and Internet sites. Work is composed and shared from a child's point of view, since the project is written and developed by kids for kids. Multi-media computer workstations are used to integrate technology into the curriculum and publish students' pictures, stories, poems, and digital images to the global community via the Internet.

The program objectives are:

1. Develop personal understanding and appreciation of the natural world
2. Work cooperatively and collaboratively
3. Develop decision making and problem solving skills
4. Improve communication in reading, writing, listening and speaking
5. Think critically by analyzing, synthesizing and assessing information
6. Conduct research activities and utilize primary reference sources
7. Examine point of view
8. Plan, design, arrange, organize and publish
9. Improve self-esteem
10. Recognize the importance to preserve and protect our environment
11. Encourage active engagement in environmental awareness

The Over the River and Through the Woods Program is innovative because it fosters active participation rather than passive engagement. It involves students in developing a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities as citizens and future voters to preserve and protect the environment. Students' projects may be used to promote Eco-tourism in their region.

The program promotes high student achievement in that it addresses community support, especially the interaction of parents, interested adult members of the community, local government, senior citizens, planning department, environmental commission, economic development commission, parks and recreation, police department, library services and the local Chamber of Commerce. The program continues to implement long range district technology plans.

What began three years ago, as a collaborative reading/language arts activity to integrate technology into the curriculum, has evolved into this interdisciplinary and intergenerational program. This program may be adapted to any grade level and replicated in K-12 districts. Students developed pride and enthusiasm, "caught the wave of technology" and became part of the global community. This project not only improved interests and attitude about research and writing, but also helped children reflect and respond to "real life" concerns.

2. **Describe the educational needs of students that the practice addresses and how they were identified. List the *Core Curriculum including the Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards* addressed by the practice and describe how the practice addresses the standard(s).**

Over the River and Through the Woods reinforces key components of the existing fourth grade curriculum of reading, language arts, mathematics, science, health, social studies, art, music, and technology. Throughout the program, reading comprehension and vocabulary skills are developed to acquire information and increase understanding. The school's recently adopted reading program provides many literature selections, which support the environmental theme of the program. In fact, the students particularly enjoyed the Earth Patrol, Preserve and Protect cluster activities.

Semantic mapping and graphic organizers help children arrange information. Webbing, outlines, lists, notes and timelines are used to keep records. Thinking skills are developed as information is classified, interpreted, analyzed, and summarized. Students communicate orally and in writing. Charts, diagrams, hand drawn pictures, computer graphics and digital images are used to synthesize and evaluate information. Throughout the program, group interaction skills improve as students assist in setting goals for their groups, learn to give and accept constructive criticism, and recognize other's views.

Currently there are 26 students, whose age range from nine to ten years old, engaged in the program. Their academic levels range from Specific Learning Disabled to above grade level in all areas. Modifications, enrichment activities and lessons integrate multiple intelligences to meet the individual needs and diverse learning styles of the students.

The *Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards* addressed in Over the River and Through the Woods are:

- All students will use technology, information and other tools
- All students will use critical thinking, decision-making and problem-solving skills
- All students will demonstrate self-management skills.

The *Core Curriculum Content Standards* addressed in the program are:

Visual and Performing Arts

- (1.4) Demonstrate the process of critique.
- (1.6) Develop design skills.

Language Arts Literacy

- (3.1) Speak for a variety of real purposes and audiences.
- (3.2) Listen actively in a variety of situations to information from a variety of sources.
- (3.3) Write in clear concise, organized language that varies in content and form for different audiences and purposes.
- (3.4) Read various materials and texts with comprehension and critical analysis.

Mathematics

- (4.1) Pose and solve mathematical problems in mathematics, other disciplines, and everyday experiences.
- (4.11) Develop an understanding of statistics and probability

Science

- (5.1) Identify components of a system.
- (5.2) Problem solving (Scientific Method)
- (5.3) Inventor/Scientists (Multicultural)
- (5.6) Life cycles of organisms, Living/Non-living Things (compare)
- (5.7) Diversity of Life
- (5.12) Interdependence (Living things and Environment)

Social Studies

- (6.1, 6.2) Democratic citizenship
- (6.4, 6.5, 6.6) Understanding of societal ideas, varying cultures, and economic forces
- (6.8, 6.9) Acquire geographical understanding, compare places, study environment

**3. Describe the assessment measures used to determine the extent to which the objectives of the practice have been met.**

Prior to launching the program, class time was spent outside investigating and observing natural habitats on the playground and woods surrounding our school. Students designated a special spot, which they claimed as their own. Each time we visited our special spots outside, small carpet squares were carried to sit upon. Each outside observation activity lasted approximately 10 to 15 minutes. This allowed time to sit quietly and to reflect and respond to changes in plants and animals in the environment. After observations were made, we returned to the classroom and used pencils and paper to record times, dates and results of our observations. Sometimes students drew illustrations, diagrams, or pictures, while others composed poems, created lists, or wrote stories. Digital cameras were used to capture images, which were imported into documents, presentations, and our Web site.

Scavenger hunts were also conducted and students followed specific directions to locate and identify plants, trees, changes in the environment, geographical features, and habitats. Cyber scavenger hunts utilized Internet sites as students went online to research information for reports and projects.

Initially, students worked independently, but then collaborated to share information and continue their research in cooperative learning groups. Students explored the five themes of geography as they studied location, place, human/environment interaction, regions, and movement. Newspapers were used throughout the year to supplement texts and provide current information related to lessons. Students linked learning about their community to the history and geography of our state's regions. Interviews with local older adults who have lived in this area for many years helped the children understand how changes in population, transportation, education and businesses affected the way people live and work. Guest speakers shared their enthusiasm, experiences and provided authentic learning activities. Monthly field trips were taken to the environmental boardwalk across the street from our school to discover the wonders of the wetlands.

The following techniques were used to assess and evaluate objectives:

- Rubrics provided evidence of design and content knowledge
- Graphic organizers provided visual evidence of information collected
- Self-monitoring forms kept students on task
- KWL charts recorded progress
- Checklists monitored skills mastered
- Peer-assessment fostered cooperative learning

Students designed colorful T-shirts using leaf prints from the plants and trees in our schoolyard. Students, teachers, parents and older adults celebrated the completion of projects with an outdoor picnic. Over the River and Through the Woods was published on our class Web site, which is hosted by a local provider and member of the Chamber of Commerce. This site is linked to the Environmental Commission's site, the local Chamber of Commerce site, and the school district's Homepage.

Students presented their on-line project and scrapbooks at a meeting of the environmental commission. Earlier this year students were invited to participate in the formal dedication of the environmental boardwalk. Governor Whitman sent a letter of congratulations for our successful involvement in developing environmental awareness. Students continued their investigations and explorations in an after school Environmental Club.